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The Bridge, An Ocean Science Education Teacher Resource Center

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LONG TERM GOAL

The Bridge helps marine science researchers in their public outreach efforts and establishes a point of contact for the scientific and education communities to discuss questions, issues and ideas.

OBJECTIVES

The Bridge online marine science education clearinghouse provides teachers with a readily accessible source for current and accurate marine science education information.

APPROACH

The Bridge staff consists of two co-Principal Investigators, one full-time project coordinator and webmaster, and a part-time marine educator who maintains “Scuttlebutt,” an e-mail discussion list, and works with online research data for the Bridge.

Educators and scientists review sites included on the Bridge. Two review committees were established to handle this task, Teacher Reviewers of On-Line Learning (TROLLs) and Scientific and Technical Advisory Reviewers (STARs). The 15-member TROLL committee reviews sites for educational usefulness based on an established list of criteria. The STAR Chairman is in the process of selecting scientists from research institutions and organizations nationwide to serve as STARs. This committee will review sites for scientific accuracy on an as-needed basis.

WORK COMPLETED & RESULTS

A “sneak preview” of the Bridge went online in April 1998, making available selected marine science topics. The grand opening of the entire Bridge website, a complex of more than 85 pages, was held at the National Marine Educators Association Annual Conference in August 1998. Since its grand opening, the Bridge has had almost 5,000 visitors and currently distributes information from more than 800 websites. The Bridge includes marine science resources in the areas of biology, chemistry, physics, geology, climate, technology, and use and management. In addition to information on these marine science topics, the site offers links to online research data, research institutions and aquariums, lesson plans, career information, and professional development information that includes teacher programs, summer opportunities, professional organizations, and grants and awards.

The Bridge staff has conducted three workshops with a total of 95 attendees and eight presentations with approximately 175 attendees, and displayed posters at the annual conferences for the National Marine Educators Association, the American Geophysical Union, the Marine Technology Society, The Coastal Society, the Coalition of Earth System Education, and the Tidewater Association of Science Educators. Nationwide advertising has begun with the distribution of more than 5,000 informational

bookmarks and the registration of the website with the major World Wide Web search engines. Regional Coordinators for the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf Coast, and Great Lakes areas have submitted proposals to Bridge project headquarters for dissemination of Bridge information to their regions and for the development of regional “hub” webpages.

During the second year of funding, the Bridge will continue to add new links and special sections to the main topical collections. Focus will be on the further development of the Online Data and Researchers sections of the Bridge to assist researchers in putting their data on the Web in a user-friendly format and to assist teachers in integrating these data into their classroom activities.